

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONOR FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 1995

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, government employees don't have much of a cheering section these days. The men and women who work diligently and conscientiously to serve our citizens and make government operate seem to be bearing more than their portion of the blame for what's perceived to be wrong with the world. The critics are relentless.

So, it is particularly noteworthy that in a recent commencement address at the University of California at Berkeley, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, Dan Beard, a self-confessed public servant with much pride in his years of service, extolled the virtues of public service. His message to the graduates was that the public employees who are being denigrated are not strangers but our friends and neighbors, whose responsibility is foremost to serve the public good.

I know the Commissioner to be an exemplary public servant from his service as the Staff Director of the Water and Power Subcommittee during my chairmanship, and later as the Director for the Full Committee during my tenure as chairman. And I am gratified that he has taken this opportunity to speak out on behalf of public servants, and to challenge those who demean their contributions and their service.

I would call to my colleagues' attention the following excerpt from the Commissioner's address at Berkeley printed earlier this month by the San Francisco Chronicle.

The article follows:

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, June 14, 1995]

THE MYTH ABOUT PUBLIC SERVANTS

(By Dan Beard)

I have a confession to make: I have worked in government for more than two decades. Even more scandalous, I am a political appointee who believes it is an honor to work with career public servants.

I guess those are dangerous things to admit these days, given the strong undercurrent of suspicion and mistrust surrounding public service. But they are beliefs I have expressed throughout my career—and they are especially important to emphasize now that I am leaving government.

We seem to be awash in a steady media diet of supposed examples of government employees who have gone too far. Of power-mad bureaucrats harassing private citizens or squeezing the life out of small businesses and property owners.

For a growing number of critics, everything that government does is viciously wrong, or at least hopelessly wrong-headed. According to them, we cannot rely on public servants to strike a fair balance between the public good and economic security.

Most of the critics of government rely on a volatile mixture of myth and innuendo to make their case. They ignore the amazing

contributions that millions of government workers have made to American prosperity, peace, happiness and yes, freedom.

How completely different is today's atmosphere from the beginning of this century, an era dominated by the first true Republican reformer, Teddy Roosevelt. Roosevelt believed most deeply and passionately in the values of public service.

"The first duty of an American citizen," he once said, "is that he should work in politics; the second is that he shall do that work in a practical manner; and the third is that it shall be done in accord with the highest principles of honor and justice."

Roosevelt spent five years as a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, and as its leading reformer worked to dismantle the spoils system and institute what we have today: a merit-based civil service system.

Before we malign government workers, let's think about who they really are. They are the people who led the rescue in Oklahoma City—not who caused it. They are the ones who are charged with apprehending those suspected of being responsible. Every day, they make their contributions to society, ensuring our food is safe to eat, the water fit to drink, and the air clean enough to breathe, teaching our children to read and write, protecting our neighborhoods and our nation as a whole.

Public servants are not monsters, and they are not strangers. All of us know them—they are our neighbors, friends, parents, children.

They are not, as the National Rifle Association would have us believe, "jack-booted thugs" who thrive on intimidating law-abiding citizens.

They are there to serve. Yes, they should be held strictly accountable and be efficient. And yes, sometimes they will do things that annoy us. Who wants to be given a parking ticket—until someone blocks us in or out by parking illegally.

Who wants to be made to conform to strict environmental laws—until we want clean water and air. Who wants government at all—until we want well-maintained highways, first-class public universities, tremendous medical and scientific technology, incredible national security and so on.

Public servants should not be castigated for doing their jobs. Most do a job that we couldn't do without. They deserve our respect.

The highest reward for any work is not what you get for it, but what you become by it. It is the goal of most government workers that our country becomes better by their work.

We should and do have vigorous and honest debate about what our government should be involved in. But, we can have it without vilifying public servants.

To all our nation's public servants, I say "thank you." You do a great deal of good for this country and the world—much, much more than many now give you credit for.

IN HONOR OF GILBERT HERRERA, OUTSTANDING YOUNG TEXAS EX

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 1995

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to pay tribute to Gilbert A. Herrera, a recipient of the 1995 Outstanding Young Texas Ex Award. Gilbert was a page in the Texas Senate during the time that I was a Texas State Senator, and we have been great friends ever since. Gilbert's intelligence, enthusiasm, and commitment to excellence have served him well, culminating with this prestigious honor.

The Outstanding Young Texas Exes Award has been presented annually since 1980 by The Ex-Students' Association to four alumni under the age of 41 who have excelled in their chosen fields of endeavor and have shown loyalty to the University of Texas. The 1995 award was presented during University of Texas' spring commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 20, 1995.

Gilbert graduated from University of Texas in 1978 with a BBA degree in finance. He is a principal of G. A. Herrera & Co., a private investment banking firm with offices in Houston and Austin, and he is also a consultant on corporate governance. Gilbert previously served in a variety of corporate finance and banking positions. In 1993 he was appointed by the Supreme Court of Texas to the Commission for Lawyer Discipline, where he serves as chair of its budget committee.

Gilbert also has been active in community service. He is a member of the board of advisors for the Texas Product Development Commission. In Houston he served on the Houston Parks Board and as trustee of the Harris County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority, where he chaired the Legislative and Employee Benefits Committees. Gilbert is a life member of the Ex-Students' Association, a lifetime member of the Century Club, a member of the Littlefield Society, the University of Texas Chancellor's Council, the MBA Investment Fund, L.L.C., and the Longhorn Associates for Women's Athletics.

Gilbert and his wife, Kari, have been personal friends of mine for many years. Today, I join their family and many friends in offering my sincere congratulations to this outstanding young Texas Ex on his selection for this recognition. His achievements are a source of pride for his family, his friends, and The University of Texas, and I know that he will continue to distinguish himself in his profession as well as in his service to his community, his State, and his country.

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